

Prevention of Sports Injuries

Softball

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PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Common injuries in softball include leg, foot, back, and shoulder injuries.
- A history of prior injury to an extremity indicates an increased risk of re-injury.
- The position played during softball influences the risk of injury. Pitchers suffer more shoulder injuries. Catchers may have a greater number of back and knee injuries due to the amount of time spent in the crouched position. Injuries to the hand are closely associated with the act of catching and is frequently associated with an inability to accurately judge the flight of the ball and to catch the ball within the gloved hand.

PERSONAL FITNESS

- Remember to participate in a total body warm-up and stretch routine at least 5 – 10 minutes prior to participation in softball activities.

EQUIPMENT:

- Rubber molded cleats and the use of baseball hats when batting are equipment items that are mandated during military softball participation.
- Breakaway bases a.k.a. progressive-release bases rather than the use of anchored bases substantially decreases the risk of softball injury when sliding.
- Jewelry, i.e., rings, necklaces, etc. are not recommended during softball activity participation.
- Clothing attire that contain pockets are not recommended due to the risk of fingers getting caught in the piece of clothing.

TRAINING / TECHNIQUE:

- Pre-participation education from trained coaching staff or from MWR Athletic Department staff is important for softball injury prevention measures. Many softball injuries can be prevented through proper coaching techniques: improving the pitching and throwing techniques, instruction in proper sliding and fielding techniques, instruction in avoiding pitched balls while batting, and the proper use of safety equipment.
- NOTE: Many MWR Facilities provide safety/injury prevention information to coaches, players, and officials regarding preparation, conditioning, and training proper playing techniques.
- The more contact the player incurs with other players, (such as sliding, collisions with other players, etc), the higher the risk of injury.

ENVIRONMENT:

- Be aware of the environment around you. Check the playing fields for any predisposing risk factors such as divots, holes, soft drink tops, glass, etc. Fences should be a reasonable distance from fair territory, in good repair, and contain no exposed edges.
- Alcohol consumption should be discouraged during participation in any sporting activity.
- Liquid and nutrition replenishment is recommended to decrease exposure-related illness.
- The size of the field should be proportional to the size of the players.
- A screened – in dugout or similar enclosures will assist in prevention of injury to offensive players and the non-playing members of the defensive team.

REFERENCE: Caine, J., Caine, C., and Lindner, K. Epidemiology of Sports Injuries. Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc., 1996.